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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 002490

SIPDIS

STATE FOR INR/B, WHA/CEN, AND WHA/PPC

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/23/2013

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [PHUM](#) [CU](#) [HO](#) [OAS](#)

SUBJECT: HONDURAS STILL FAR AWAY FROM NAMING AMBASSADOR TO CUBA

REF: A. HAVANA 17832

[1](#)B. OCTOBER 21 TRIVELLI-PALMER E-MAIL

[1](#)C. STATE 297777

Classified By: Political Counselor Francisco Palmieri;  
Reasons 1.5(B) and (D).

[1](#)1. (C) President Maduro's National Security Advisor, Ramon Medina Luna, informed PolCouns October 21 that the Government of Honduras (GOH) was still a long way from naming an ambassador to Cuba. Medina Luna assured PolCouns that selecting an ambassador to Cuba was not a pressing issue, nor was it likely to be on the GOH's agenda for the immediate future. Medina Luna did make a point of noting, however, that Cuba has already posted an ambassador to Honduras. Because the decision to normalize diplomatic relations was made by the previous government, Luna indicated that at some point in the future the GOH would have to move on the issue. He also repeated concerns about attending to the 700 Honduran medical students in Cuba and continuing pressure on this issue from the Honduran private sector.

[1](#)2. (C) Separately, on October 17 and on October 22, PolCouns pressed the MFA Director General for Foreign Policy Mario Fortin and Chief of Protocol Ambassador Ricardo Flores, respectively, on the possible naming of a Honduran Ambassador to Cuba. Both stated unequivocally that naming an ambassador to Cuba was not a high Honduran foreign policy priority. Fortin added that he did not think there would be any movement on this issue until some time next year. He then characterized the recent public statements by newly appointed Foreign Minister Leonides Rosa Bautista as having been twisted by the media and given greater prominence than they merited. Fortin explained the FM's comments on this sensitive topic revealed Rosa's inexperience in how to deal with the media in his new position as Foreign Minister. (Comment: In other words, Rosa learned a lesson that his comments as FM are more likely to generate media interest and that he must more carefully parse his public statements than he did as a Congressman. End Comment.)

[1](#)3. (SBU) Both interlocutors shared our concern over Cuba's March crackdown on civil society members and expressed agreement on the need for international action. Flores could not commit to GOH support for a resolution at the Ibero-American Summit (ref C), but Post expects that Honduras would support such an initiative, if approached by the sponsors.  
Palmer